



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO

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CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL ANNOUNCES RECORD HIGH LEVELS OF STUDENT INTEREST IN
THRIVING CHICAGO TECH SECTOR**

*Record Number of Applications Builds on Recent Success Attracting Top Tech Talent to Chicago;
Nearly 900 Students Applied for the ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week Program in 2016*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today announced record high levels of student interest in Chicago's thriving tech sector, demonstrated by the record number of student applications for the sixth annual installment of the ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week program. The ThinkChicago program brings together students from technology, engineering and entrepreneurship backgrounds to explore Chicago's technology and cultural scenes. This year, 889 undergraduate and graduate students from across the country applied to the program, a nearly threefold increase over the 2015 program.

"Chicago is the perfect location for the future tech leaders of the world to develop their next great idea," Mayor Emanuel said. "Chicago is proud of its well-earned reputation as a world-class hub for innovation and entrepreneurship. We look forward to welcoming to next group of ThinkChicago students and helping them explore and engage with our great city's technology ecosystem."

"ThinkChicago spotlights the variety of opportunities to start tech careers here in Chicago –whether in a startup, scaling enterprise or a large corporate organization," World Business Chicago technology council, ChicagoNEXT, Chairman Mark Tebbe said. "We're thrilled to see the record number of applications, indicating that more graduates than ever are excited to join our fast-growing, diverse tech community."

Applicants to the ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week program all expressed interest in Chicago's booming tech scene and are considering Chicago for potential post-graduate employment. Included among this year's diverse group of applicants are students from premier institutions across the United States, including MIT, Duke, Stanford, CalTech, Columbia and Yale, along with homegrown talent from the University of Illinois system and other major universities from the Chicago area. The applicants with the most exceptional track records and commitment to innovation and technology will be invited to attend the program, taking place October 20-22.

Since its inception in 2011, 1,150 students have been introduced to Chicago's flourishing tech ecosystem through ThinkChicago: Chicago Ideas Week and its sister program, ThinkChicago: Lollapalooza. This year, 200 students – 50 more than the 2015 program – will take part in the program. Students will attend Chicago Ideas Week talks,

121 NORTH LASALLE STREET, ROOM 507, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

take VIP tours of local company offices and hear from tech, business and civic leaders. Students will also take part in a “Civic Tech Challenge” and pitch their own innovative ideas to improve everyday life for Chicago residents.

Today’s announcement builds off of recent news demonstrating Chicago’s appeal to leaders within the tech sector. A recent Modis survey of 500 influential tech professionals ranked Chicago as the #1 city for future tech hotspots, ahead of other major cities such as Houston, Boston, Denver and Philadelphia. Chicago was selected as a future tech hotspot, particularly among women, individuals aged 26-34 years old and individuals holding a bachelor’s or professional degree. The full results of the survey can be viewed [here](#).

The Emanuel administration believes that a strong technology industry is a key component of a vibrant Chicago economy. In April 2016, Mayor Emanuel welcomed tech industry leaders, start-ups and nearly 150 investment firms to the 2016 Chicago Venture Summit. In addition, Mayor Emanuel announced the creation of more than 700 new jobs at 16 Chicago tech companies and the expansion of tech incubator 1871.

ThinkChicago is organized by the Mayor’s Office, World Business Chicago, University of Illinois system, Lollapalooza and Chicago Ideas Week. This year’s ThinkChicago programming is made possible by contributions from Center for Lost Arts, Chicago Ideas Week, Chicago’s First Lady, Civis Analytics, Enova, Horizon Pharma, IBM, kCura, Lollapalooza, MakeOffices, MATTER, Microsoft, Motorola Mobility, Northern Trust and 1871. For more information, visit www.lollapalooza.com, www.chicagoideas.com and www.thinkchicago.net.

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